Amateur Radio Newsline(tm) Report 1664 - July 3 2009

Amateur Radio Newsline report number 1664 with a release date of Friday, July 3rd, 2009 to follow in 5-4-3-2-1.

The following is a Q-S-T. The FCC starts its long scheduled rules review and ham radios Part 97 is included. Also, hams in Poland go on flood watch alert, Europe may put emission standards on ham radio a very cold DXpedition on Amateur Radio Newsline(tm) report number 1664 coming your way right now.

(Billboard Cart Here)

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REGULATORY: FCC SEEKS COMMENTS ON REVISING OR ELIMINATING CERTAIN RULES

The Part 97 Amateur Service rules are among those to be reviewed by the FCC or their relevance, modification and continuation for the next several years. Bruce Tennant, K6PZW, is here with the rest of the story:

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Pursuant to the Regulatory Flexibility Act in section 610 of the United States Code, the FCC is publishing a plan for the review of rules adopted by the agency in calendar year 1998. Rules which have, or might have, a significant economic impact on a substantial number of small entities.

The actual purpose of the review is to determine whether such rules should be continued without change, or should be amended or rescinded. This, to minimize any significant economic impact of such rules on the previously mentioned substantial number of small entities.

In addition to Amateur Radio in Part 97 of the FCC regulations, other services to have their rules reviewed are the Part 20 Mobile Service, the Part 22 Cellular Telephone Service, Part 73 Broadcast Services, the Part 95 Citizens Radio Services to mention only a few.

The FCC rules review notice is designated as CB Docket No. 09-102. It was issued on June 24th and carries a 60 day commentary period.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Bruce Tennant, K6PZW, in Los Angeles. -- You can download and read the entire document detailing this regulatory review at the U-R-L found at: http://hraunfoss.fcc.gov/edocs_public/attachmatch/DA-09-1307A1.doc) (FCC, CGC)

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RADIO POLITICS: NEW FCC CHAIRMAN SWORN IN

The FCC has a new Chairman. On Monday, June 29th, US Supreme Court Justice David Souter swore in Julius Genachowski as the new Chairman of

the Federal Communications Commission.

President Obama had nominated Julius Genachowski to lead the Commission on March 3rd. The Senate confirmed him as the new Chairman of the FCC on June 25th. At the same time it also reconfirmed current FCC Commissioner Robert McDowell for his first full term.

President Obama has also nominated South Carolina Democrat Mignon Clyburn and Republican Meredith Attwell Baker for the last two vacant Commissioner seats. If confirmed by the Senate, Clyburn and Baker would bring the FCC to its full complement of five Commissioners. (ARRL and various published news reports)

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RESCUE RADIO: POLISH HAMS ON FLOOD ALERT

Ham radio is on emergency stand-by in Poland. This, following flooding that has hit the South-Western part of that European nation.

Greg Mossop, G0DUB, is the IARU Region 1 Emergency Communications Coordinator. He relays word that following the recent flooding and a continuing flood threat to the region, the DASR Polish emergency group is saying that 3.760 MHz may be used for emergency communication.

If this activation takes place, Polish radio amateurs will be requesting that hams in other parts of the world to keep this frequency clear if you hear any ongoing emergency traffic. G0RUB adds that further updates will be posted as they are received. (Southgate)

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TECHNOLOGY: EUROPE MAY REQUIRE HAM GEAR TO MEET EMMISSION STANDARDS

Future amateur radio gear may sold in Europe need to meet very specific emissions standards. The Radio Society of Great Britain reports that the European Telecommunications Standards Institute is moving towards requiring commercially produced, ready to use amateur radio equipment to conform to international standards for emissions. As of now, the proposals will not affect kits or homebrew equipment. If such rules were enacted it would likely lead to a price increase in commercially made gear sold in that market. (GB2RS News, others)

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ON THE AIR: HAMS COMMEMORATE THE APOLLO 11 MOON LANDING

Ham radio operators around the world spent the weekend of June 27th and 28th bouncing radio conversations off the surface of the Moon. This to help commemorate Apollo 11 Moon landing 40 years ago.

Organized in Australia and the United States, the on-the-air event brought together hundreds of amateur radio operators from around the world, some armed with their own radio dishes. It was timed to coincide with the 40th anniversary next month of the Apollo 11 landing that took place on July 20, 1969.

The earlier date was chosen for two reasons. First is that the Moon does not orbit directly around the Earth's equator, this was the nearest weekend organizers could arrange for practical reasons. Secondly, the date chosen happened to coincide with the 2009 ARRL Field Day operating event. This meant that there would be lots of hams on the air on every mode including Moonbounce.

At airtime its not known how many Apollo anniversary contacts were made, but those hams trying had to be patient. It takes about 2.5 seconds for a radio signal to reach the Moon and bounce back to another part of the Earth. As such any two way contact meant waiting about 5 seconds to get a reply. (N6ZXJ, WB9QZB from published reports)

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EMERGING TECHNOLOGY: MIT ANNOUNCES NEW COGNITIVE RADIO CHIP

Engineers at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology have built a fast, ultra-broadband, low-power radio integrated circuit chip. One modeled on the human inner ear that that could have applications in cognitive radios.

Researchers say that the new RF cochlea is embedded on a silicon chip measuring 1.5 mm by 3 mm and works as an analog spectrum analyzer by detecting the composition of any electromagnetic waves within its perception range. They say that the new chip could enable wireless devices capable of receiving cell phone, Internet, radio, television and other signals using a single device.

For those not aware, the term cognitive radio is a paradigm for wireless communication in which either a network or a wireless node that changes its transmission or reception parameters to communicate efficiently avoiding interference with other spectrum users. More about the new radio chip is on-line at www.sciencedaily.com/releases/2009/06/090603131441.htm   (Science Daily, others)

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BREAK 1

>From the United States of America, We are the Amateur Radio Newsline, heard on bulletin stations around the world including the KA9LOY repeater serving Schaumberg Illinois.

(5 sec pause here)

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ENFORCEMENT: CHINESE MADE HT'S MAY BE ILLEGAL TO IMPORT TO THE USA

Some deals are too good to be true or legal. That's the story with some rather inexpensive HT's being sold on-line. Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, is in our newsroom with more:

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Inexpensive VHF and UHF transceivers made in China that transmit and receive on the 2 meter and 70 centimeter bands appear to be illegal for hams to buy from overseas dealers and have shipped into the United States. This is because the radios have not passed the FCC certification procedure nor can they as they are designed to transmit on frequencies outside of the United States amateur radio allocations right out of the box.

The radios in question bear names like Puxing, FDC, Wouxon, and numerous others. They are being mainly sold on Bay and similar on-line auction sites world-wide at prices ranging from $30 to $80 plus shipping. Most of the ads originate from dealers in Taiwan or Hong Kong though some have come from other Pacific Rim nations as well.

According to postings on various chat websites, the radios themselves are not all that bad quality. Not great, but not to shabby. Almost all of them feature a back-lit LCD display, up to 100 memory channels, programmable repeater offsets, and even a built-in CTCSS tone encoder.

Output power on the VHF units approaches 5 watts while the UHF models average around 2 watts out. Hams using them report that the transmit audio quality ranges from a bit muffled to good depending on the model and manufacturer of the set.

With retail prices far below that of similar radios from Alinco, Icom, Kenwood and Yaesu, hams on this side of the Pacific might find these Chinese built transceivers hard to resist. But as pointed out in on-line postings, the biggest problem aside from it being illegal to import is where to get one fixed if its dropped or stops operating? Also, replacement battery packs might be very hard to find if the one that comes with the radio goes flat and cannot be revived.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, in the newsroom in Los Angeles.

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With all of this taken into account the radios may not be that great of a bargain, after all. Or in the words of the old sage: Caveat Emptor. Buyer beware. (ARNewsline(tm))

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ENFORCEMENT: PA SKI RESORT FINED $5000 FOR UNLICENSED RADIO OPERATIONS

A ski resort in Pennsylvania has been ordered to auntie up $5000 by the FCC. This after the regulatory agency found that the Bear Creek Mountain Resort has been using a variety of 460 MHz land-mobile frequencies without a license.

The story goes back to 2008 when the FCC's Philadelphia Field Office received a complaint that the Bear Creek Mountain Resort in Macungie was operating radio communications equipment on several frequencies

without a license. An agent was dispatched who observed and recorded several transmissions on 461.3500 MHz, 462.5000 MHz, 464.4250 MHz, and 467.7625 MHz.. On 462.500 MHz, the agent heard an individual request assistance bringing a girl with a broken wrist down the mountain.

On June 10th of 2008 the FCC issued the resort a $10,000 Notice of Apparent Liability for its unlicensed radio operation. The resort countered that the fine should be cancelled because it did not knowingly violate the Commission's Rules. But the FCC countered that it found the violations to be deliberate and that the resort must be penalized. However, it would take mitigating circumstances into account and reduce the fine to $5000.

The order affirming the $5000 fine was issued on June 24th. The Bear Creek Mountain Resort was given the customary 30 days to pay or to file a further appeal. (FCC)

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ENFORCEMENT: LIST OF POTENTIALLY STOLEN EQUIPMENT IN THE BONDY CASE PUBLISHED ON LINE

A follow-up to our report in the case of Kevin Bondy, who now faces a $24,000 fine for jamming the radio system in a Southern California shopping mall. A police search of his residence has turned up what's being described as an extraordinary amount of potentially stolen radio gear.

The Ventura County Sheriff's Department has prepared a list of what was found on the premises and is asking the public's help in identifying any rightful owners. The equipment can be viewed on-line. Items 120 to 123 involve FM broadcast equipment. The rest is land-mobile gear including repeaters with a few miscellaneous items such as computers, CB and amateur radio gear mixed in.

There are two URL's you need to know. The first takes you to the list of equipment. The second shows pictures of the FM broadcast equipment and gives contact information for the Ventura County Sheriff. The URL's with this information are:

Equipment list: http://earthsignals.com/add_CGC/Oaks_Mall_09-5771.pdf
Photographs of the FM broadcast equipment:
http://earthsignals.com/add_CGC/Letters/Stolen%20Equipment.htm
Background information on Kevin Bondy:
http://www.fcc.gov/eb/FieldNotices/2003/DOC-290813A1.html) (CGC)

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ENFORCEMENT: FCC REFUSES TO ACT ON ELT MODIFICATION CASE

The FCC has turned away a strange complaint regarding an Emergency Beacon Locator device purchased from an unnamed vendor in the United Kingdom by a resident of France. Don Wilbanks, AE5DW, has the details:

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In a letter dated October 24, 2008, Jean Pierre de Lutz of La Garde Freinet. France submitted a complaint regarding ACR Electronics, Inc. which is located in Great Britain. In his letter, Lutz stated that ACR duplicated the hexadecimal code for his 406 MHz Emergency Position Indicating Radiobeacon and that this duplication caused him and his crew to be placed in life-threatening storm conditions at sea unnecessarily.

According to Lutz complaint, he purchased the device in 2002 and immediately registered it with the United States National Oceanographic and Atmospheric Administration. In 2007 he activated the beacon when his vessel encountered storm conditions during an Atlantic crossing. But in the intervening years another beacon manufactured with the same code was also sold and when it was registered with NOAA it overwrote the entry for Lutz unit. As a result Lutz claims that the duplication of the code between his emergency beacon and that of another vessel resulted in a potentially disastrous delay in the dispatch of Coast Guard personnel to rescue him and his crew.

But the FCC disagrees. In its findings, the agency says that ACR is not at fault. It says that the two ACR beacons in question had unique hexadecimal codes until Lutz beacon was altered by the vendor. The FCC added that while it is concerned that this situation occurred, it finds no basis to conclude that ACR violated any rules.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Don Wilbanks, AE5DW, near New Orleans..

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The FCC did advise Lutz that any complaint regarding the vendor's alteration of the hexadecimal code should be referred to United Kingdom authorities. In addition, comments regarding emergency beacon registration procedures in the United States should be addressed to NOAA. It says that NOAA has changed the registration procedures to ensure that similar duplications do not go undetected, and that the correct user registration information is retained.   (FCC)

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RADIO LAW: FCC TO INVESTIGATE CELLPHONE EXCLUSIVITY DEALS

Federal telecommunications regulators are going to investigate whether exclusive cell phone deals, such as the one that locks the Apple iPhone to AT&T, are good for consumers. Michael Copps, the then acting chairman of the Federal Communications Commission announced on June 16th he had instructed the agency's staff to open a review of exclusivity arrangements. (FCC)

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NEW BOOKS: THE NIFTY E-Z GUIDE TO D-STASR OPERATION

>From the bookshelf comes word of a new work especially for users of D-Star. Titled the Nifty E-Z Guide to D-Star Operation, it was authored by Bernie Lafreniere, N6FN, the book covers every aspect of D-Star

operation from the most basic to the more advanced aspects of this emerging digital voice mode.

In his tome N6FN utilizes easy to understand explanations and lots of illustrations to explain such things as radio programming procedures needed to route calls, the operation using local and remote repeaters and reflectors and much more.

The Nifty E-Z Guide to S-Star operation is 104 pages long and is being published by Nifty Ham Accessories. Suggested list price is about $14 from wherever books of this nature are sold. (WB9QZB)

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NAMES IN THE NEWS: W0YK APPOINTED AS NCDXF ADVISOR

Some names in the news. First up is Ed Muns, W0YK, who has been appointed as an Advisor to the Northern California DX Foundation Board of Directors.

Muns comes to the position with experience as a part of the 1994 YK0A team. He has also operated as 6Y0A and 6Y4A as well as holding the 7J1ACJ call sign. His primary duty will be working with the foundations website along with Doug Bender, WW6D. (NCDXF)

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NAMES IN THE NEWS: SOUTH AFRICA'S HONOREES

South Africa's Garth Milne Technology Award has been jointly presented to Andrew Roos, ZS6AA, and Hannes Coetzee, ZS6BPZ. This, in recognition of their design and development of the Amateur Payload on SumbandilaSat. This is a ham radio which is due to be launched on 21 August on a Soyuz Rocket from Baikonur.

Also, that nations NSN Amateur Radio Community Service Award was presented to Francois Botha, ZS6BUU. He was honored for his dedication as National HAMNET Director, to the development of amateur radio as a support communication service during emergencies and disasters.

Lastly, the annual South African construction competition sponsored by Multisource was won by Carson McAfee. He is a second year university student who built the Quadra Helix Antenna. (SARL)

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THE SOCIAL SCENE: THE TIDELANDS HAMFEST JULY 11th IN TEXAS

Turning to the ham radio social scene, the Tidelands Amateur Radio Society Hamfest will be held on July 11th at the Doyle Convention Center, in Texas City. The event will feature major radio and associated equipment vendors, hourly and unscheduled prizes, a hidden transmitter hunt and much more. More information on this fun event is on-line at www.tidelands.org. (Press Release)

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THE SOCIAL SCENE

And the 14th IARU Region 3 Conference takes place Christchurch, New Zealand. This, from October 12th to the 16th. Lots of events are planned. More is on line at www.christchurch.org.nz (NZART)

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BREAK 2

This is ham radio news for today's radio amateur. From the United States of America, We are the Amateur Radio Newsline with links to the world from our only official website at www.arnewsline.org and being relayed by the volunteer services of the following radio amateur:

(5 sec pause here)

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WORLDBEAT: VK FOUNDATION CALLSIGN CONFUSION

There seems to be confusion in ham radio circles worldwide concerning the Australian 4-letter suffix callsigns. Calls such as VK4FABC or VK7FXYZ and such.

These 4-letter suffixes are issued by Australia to its entry level Foundation-class amateurs. All Foundation class suffixes begin with the letter 'F' followed by 3 more letters.

These are legitimate calls issued by the Australian government. If you contact someone with one, be aware that he or she is a relatively new ham and be sure to welcome them to the hobby. (OPDX)

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EMERGING TECHNOLOGY: SOLAR POWERED AIRPLANE UNVEILED

Swiss adventurer Bertrand Piccard has unveiled a prototype of the solar-powered airplane. One that he hopes eventually to fly around the world.

The aircraft has a wing span of 61 meters and weighs in at only 1,500kg. It will have four small battery powered engines driving propellers. A large solar array atop the high wing structure will be used as a solar collector to power the aircraft in daylight as well as to charge the batteries for nighttime flights.

Before any voyage is undertaken the craft will undergo trials to prove it can fly through the night. The final version of the plane will attempt its to cross the Atlantic on a test flight in 2012.

Dr. Piccard, who made history in 1999 by circling the globe non-stop in a balloon, says he wants to demonstrate the potential of renewable energies. (Southgate)

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EMERGING TECHNOLOGY: 4 GHZ LED DEVELOPED

Researchers have constructed a light-emitting transistor that has set a new record with a signal-processing modulation speed of 4.3 Gigahertz. In a pair of papers published in the June 15th issue of Applied Physics Letters, researchers at the University of Illinois and Quantum Electro Opto Systems in Malaysia, report the development and successful testing of the new high-speed light-emitting transistor and new "tilted-charge" light-emitting diode.

The modulation speed of either a light-emitting diode or a light-emitting transistor is limited by the rate at which electrons and holes recombine. This recombination lifetime is important in determining device overall speed. These new devices break the previous record of 1.7 Gigahertz held by a light-emitting diode some time ago. (Science OnLine)

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RADIO IN SPACE: HIUBBLE RADIOS BACK NEW PLANETS

Earth seems to have its first photos of planets outside our solar system. This, in images captured by two teams of astro researchers using the Hubble Space telescope which radioed the images back to Earth.

Astronomer Bruce Macintosh is with the Lawrence Livermore National Lab. He says that the photos show four likely planets that appear as specks of white that are all but invisible to all but the most eagle-eyed experts.

The tiny planets are trillions of miles away. Three of them are orbiting the same star, and the fourth circling a different star. None of the four giant gaseous planets are remotely but they do raise the possibility of others more hospitable planets do exist.   (Space)

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INTRUDER WATCH: NORTH KOREA EMBASSY ON 20 METERS

Another intruder into the ham bands. The IARU Region 1 monitoring service reports that the North Korean embassy in Tripoli is again using 14.328430MHz. This, for traffic with the Ministry of Foreign Affairs in Pyongyang. Monitors report hearing an ARQ burst system at 600 Baud and 600Hz shift, operating on two different frequencies at about 16:30UTC daily. One frequency is in the amateur radio band, the other one out of it. (Southgate)

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INTRUDER WATCH: CODAR RADAR IN THE 24 MHz BAND

Slightly better news with word that the Codar HF Radar from Naples on the 24MHz band has disappeared. This, after a complaint from IK8OZZ.

Unfortunately, a few days later another Codar system was found on 24.850 to 24.950kHz. Bearings taken by the German PTT indicated the source was on Pag Island, Croatia. The German department of Post and Telecommunications has reportedly filed an official complaint to their Croatian counterpart. (Southgate)

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ON THE AIR: CELEBRATING 100 YEARS OF FLIGHT IN THE NETHERLANDS

A reminder that members of a Netherlands based experimental radio group will be active as PH100EL through July 12th. This, to celebrate the 100th anniversary of aviation in Holland by pioneer Count Charles de Lambert. A special 100 Years of Aviation award with mode endorsements will be available. QSL via PD0PVQ. (Via e-mail)

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THE CONTEST CORNER: ARRL UHF CONTEST CERTIFICATES ON THEIR WAY

Turning to contest news. Sean Kutzko, KX9X, the Contest Branch Manager for the ARRL says that certificates for the 2008 ARRL August UHF Contest and the 10 GHz and Up Cumulative Contest have been processed. Shipment began late last week. Kutzko says that winners should start to see them arrive in their mailbox any day. (ARRL)

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DX

In DX, the long awaited 2009 Glorioso operation as FT5GA still seems to be on track. Its currently scheduled to begin on July 9th and be on the air through the 28th. More information on this one as soon as we hear that they are on the air.

word that I3LDP, will be active from Mauritius between through July 11th. His activity will be on the HF bands and 6 meters using CW and SSB. His equipment will be an IC-7000, a vertical for 40 through 10meters and a vertical dipole for 6. QSL via his home callsign.

DL7JAN and DL2IX will be active portable CT8 from Faial Island in the Azores from August 21st to the 31st. Their operation will be on 80 through 6 meters using CW, SSB and RTTY. QSL via their home call, either via the bureau or direct.

F2JD will be in the Philippines for the next five months and hopes to get his DU1G0SHN license extended. He plans to activate some I-O-T-A locations during his stay. QSL direct or via the REF Bureau to F6AJA.

I2MOV will depart for Sardinia on July 20th, and will be active for about two months portable I-S-Zero. His QTH will be Dolianova which is 2 0km north from Cagliari. QSL via his home callsign, either direct or via the bureau.

Lastly, GM0IIO, will be active portable SV5 from the Island of Rhodes

through July 8th . Listen for him on 20 meters on CW and SSB running 100 watts into a 20 meter ends fed antenna.. QSL via GM0IIO.

(Above from various DX news sources)

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THAT FINAL ITEM: A VICARIOUS WAY TO DX FROM DOWN UNDER

And finally this week, news of a very interesting low power DXpedition to a very rare spot down-under. Its in Australia and so is Graham Kemp, VK4BB

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Several Victorian amateurs are preparing portable gear and cross-country ski kit in readiness for their annual back country trip into the Bogong High Plains.

The group will be lead once more by VK3GT, VK3SN and VK3HFI along with several others as they take ultra-light solar powered gear in to the snowy wonderland of the Australian Alps from 6 to 10 August this year.

And VK3SN is going from, well might say the sublime to the ridiculous, you see just prior to hitting the slopes, he'll be heading a DXpedition to the tropical wonderland called Tonga.

Listen out for the portable QRP station in the snow calling on bands from 160 through to 20 meters each afternoon and evening. Have a chat and hear about winter conditions on the roof of Australia.

For the Amateur Radio Newsline, I'm Graham Kemp, VK4BB, reporting from Brisbane.

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In previous years this group of hearty DX'ers have operated from tents, snow caves, igloos and remote mountain huts. Nobody knows what they'll get to stay in this year. That said, they say that the southern hemisphere winter snow looks great and you can share in the fun by catching them on the air. (WIA News)

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NEWSCAST CLOSE

With thanks to Alan Labs, AMSAT, the ARRL, the CGC Communicator, CQ Magazine, the FCC, the Ohio Penn DX Bulletin, Radio Netherlands, Rain, the RSGB, the Southgate News and Australia's W-I-A News, that's all from the Amateur Radio Newsline(tm). Our e-mail address is newsline@arnewsline.org. More information is available at Amateur Radio Newsline's(tm) only official website located at www.arnewsline.org. You can also write to us or support us at Amateur Radio Newsline(tm), P.O. Box 660937, Arcadia, California 91066.

For now, with Bill Pasternak, WA6ITF, at the editors desk, I'm Don Carlson, KQ6FM, in Reno, Nevada, saying 73 and we thank you for listening.

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